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South Asian Common Market

3524. SHRI RAMNARAYAN GOSWAMI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state whether Government is considering for the promotion of a South Asian Common Market, a la European Union, with free flow of goods and personnel across frontiers of these countries?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): There is no proposal under consideration of Government for the promotion of South Asian Common Market with free flow of goods and personnel across frontiers of these countries.

The seven SAARC countries namely India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the Maldives have entered into an agreement called the SAARC Perferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA). The agreement was signed on 11th April, 1993 and would enter into force after compition of the formalities by all member states SAPTA establishes a framework for exchange of trade concessions among the member states of SAARC.

INDO-SYRIAN Trade Relations

3525. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to enhance trade with Syria;

(b) if so, the fields in which the Indo-Syrian trade relations are proposed to be established;

(c) whether any pact has been signed by both the countries in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) to (d). The 3rd Session of the Indo-Syrian Joint Trade Committee was held at Damascus during June 4-7, 1994. As per the agreed Minutes of this meeting, the two sides agreed to take all necessary steps for the extension and diversification of the commercial exchanges between the two countries, by all ways and means, the achieve better trade balance between the two countries, mainly by:

(i) Participation in the international fairs and exhibitions to be held in the two countries;

(ii) Encouraging exchange of visits between businessmen of the two countries;

(iii) Promoting the exchange of business information among the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of both countries;

(iv) Encouraging the concerned enterprises of the two countries to conclude equal deals/contracts for;

Syrian good: Rock phosphate, Petrocoke, Lentils, Barley, Cotton Yarn, etc.

Indian goods: June Rice, Rubber, Engineering goods, Spare Parts for electrical power plants, etc.

Import against special import Licences

3526. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to allow the import of some of the additional items including wood products, educational games and aviation turbine fuel against special import licences; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b). Additional items have been permitted against special import licences vide